

PRECEPTS,

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OR,

Rules of Advice to a Son:

By a late Eminent LAWYER.

I Advise you not to come too soon from the University, and also to make some inspection into Physick, and the Law, aswell as Divinity, for they will contribute to make your Company acceptable wherever you come. But prosecute not, beyond a superficial knowledge, any Learning that moves upon no stronger Legs than the tottering Basis of Conjecture is able to afford it.

2. No study is worth a Mans whole employment, that comes not accompanied with Profit, or such unanswerable Reasons, as are able to answer and silence all future debate, not to be found out of the Mathematicks, the Queen of Truth, that imposeth nothing upon her Subjects, but what she proves due to belief by infallible Demonstration. The only knowledge we can gain on Earth, likely to attend us to Heaven.

3. Huge Volumes may proclaim plenty of Labour and Invention, but afford less of what is delicate, savoury, and well concocted, than lesser pieces: Humane sufficiency being too narrow to inform with the pure soul of Reason such vast Bodies. You may gain more natural and useful Knowledge, by being conversant in the Speeches, Declarations, and Transactions occasioned by the late unhappy Wars, than is ordinarily to be found in the mouldy Records of Antiquity. The Understanding is nourished more by a few Books well Studied, than by great numbers curiously run over, as is the Practice of most Students.

4. Let not an over-passionate prosecution of Learning draw you from making an honest improvement of your Estate, as such do, who are better read in the bigness of the whole Earth, than that little spot left them by their Ancestors for their support.

5. Be sure never to lend your Money upon the Publick Faith, for he that does so, becomes security for his own Money; and can blame no body more than himself if never paid: Common Debts like Common Lands lying most neglected.

6. Honesty treats with the World upon such vast disadvantage, that a Pen is often as useful to defend you as a Sword, by making Writing the Witness of all your Contracts: For where Profit appears, it doth com-

monly cancel all the Bands of Friendship, Religion, and the memory of any thing that can produce no other Register than what is Verbal Measure the End of all Counsels, though uttered by never so intimate a Friend.

7. When you are inclined to enter into the state of Marriage, make not a celebrated Beauty the Object of your Choice, unless you are ambitious of rendring your House as populous as a Confectioners Shop; to which the gaudy Wasps no less than the liquorish Flies, make it their business to resort, in hope of obtaining a Lick at your Honey-pot; which though bound up with the strongest Obligations; yet Feminine Vessels are obnoxious to so many Frailties, as they can hardly bear without breaking; such Pride and Content they naturally take in seeing themselves adored: Marriage is most freed from such inconveniencies as may obstruct Felicity, when accompanied with a good Estate; therefore take the true extent of her Estate before you entail your self upon the Owner. And in this common Fanie is not to be trusted, which for the most part dilates a Portion beyond its natural bounds; proving also not seldom litigious, and that given by Will questionable; by which Husbands are tyed to a Black-Box, more miserable than that of Pandora. Yet take one who thinks her self rather beneath than above you in Birth, since Honourable Persons, as is reported of Eagles Feathers in a Bed, consume all not of the same Plume. Riches were in a like predicament in relation to Pride, but easier passed by, because best able to bear the Charges of her own Folly; whereas lean Honour, like Pharaoh's Kine, devours the Gentry with whom they match, by multiplying the quantity of their Expences.

8. If you happen to Travel, let not the Irreligion of any place breed in you a neglect of Divine Duties; remembering God heard the Prayers of Daniel in Babylon, with the same attention he gave to Davids in Sion. Shun all Disputes, but especially concerning Religion; because that which commands in chief, though false and erroneous, will, like a Cock on's own Dunghill, line her Arguments with force, and drive the Stranger out of the Pit with insignificant clamours.

9. A multitude inflamed under a Religious pretence, is at first as unsafely opposed as joined with; resembling Bears exasperated by the cry of their Whelps, and do not seldom, if unextinguished by hope or delay, consume all before them, to the very thing they intend to preserve. The Example of *Brutus* rather than *Caesar* is to be followed in bad times; it being safer to be patient than active; or appear a Fool than a Malecontent. Make not the Law, assigned for a Buckler to defend your self, a Sword to hurt others. Be not the Pen or Mouth of a Multitude, congregated by the ringing of their Fetters, lest a Pardon or Compliance knock them off, and leave you as the soul of that wicked and deformed Body, hanging in the Hell of the Law, or you be justly left to the vengeance of an exasperated Power. If Authority requires an acknowledgment from you, give it with all readiness; and let not the Example of a few Fools tempt you to dispute the matter with those, under whom the dispose of your person doth wholly remain.

10. Look not upon it as any disparagement to your discretion or birth, to give Honour to New Families; for it cannot be denied but that they have ascended by the like steps as those that have the repute of Ancient. Now being a Term only respecting us, not the World; for what is now, was before, and will be when we are gone.

11. It is truly said that War follows Peace, and Peace War, as Summer doth Winter, and foul Weather fair: And none are ground more in this Mill of Vicissitudes, than such obstinate Fools as glory in the repute of State-martyrs after they are dead; which concerns them less than what was said a thousand years before they were born.

12. Be not liquorish after Fame, found by Experience to carry a Trumpet, that doth for the most part congregate more Enemies than Friends. The consideration of the inconstancy of Common Applause, and that many have had their Fame broken upon the same Wheel that raised it, and puff'd out by the same Breath that kindled the first report of it, should admonish you not to be elevated with the smiles, nor dejected at the frowns of that gaudy Goddess, formed out of no more solid matter than the foam of the Multitude.

13. Be not persuaded by any above you, to bear a part in the carrying on of any Design whereby you may run the hazard of falling under the punishment of the Law; for if you miscarry, you will meet with no better assistance or commiseration, (even by those that put you upon it) than the imputation of Folly, and want of discretion in the management.

14. Write not the Faults of Persons near the Throne, in any Nation where you reside, lest your Letters should be intercepted, and you sent out of the World before your time. But re-

serve such discourse for the single ear of your Master, into which you must pour it with more Caution than Malice; lest it should be discovered, as it is odds but it will, and then the next endeavour is revenge. It is an office unbecoming a Gentleman, to be an Intelligencer, which in real Truth is no better than a Spie; who are often brought to the Torture, and dye miserably, though no words are made of it, being an use connived at by some Princes.

15. As for your Religion, I can approve of no Doctrin for Magisterial Dignity, but that which is found floating in the unquestioned sense of the Scriptures; but advise you to follow that of the Reformation (*viz.* The Church of *England* as by Law established) as most conformable to the Duty we owe to God and the Magistrate. The Schismatick is so fiery that he cannot last long unconsumed, being ready upon the least advantage to melt all into Sedition, not sparing to burn the Fingers of Government longer than they shewer down Offices and Preferments upon him.

16. As for your Converse, despise none for meanness of Blood, yet do not ordinarily make them your Companions, for debasing your own, unless you find them clarified by excellent Parts, or gilded by Fortune or Power. *Solomon* having sent the Sluggard to the Pismire, to learn industry, and to the living Dog rather than to the dead Lion for Protection.

17. When you speak to any, (especially of Quality) look them full in the Face; other Gestures betraying want of Breeding, Confidence, or Honesty; dejected Eyes confessing, to most judgments, Guilt or Folly.

18. Live so frugally, that you may reserve something to enable you to grapple with any future contingency. And provide in Youth, since fortune hath this property with other common Mistresses, that she deserts Age, especially in the Company of want.

19. Though it may sute no less with your years than mine that advise you, to follow such Fashions in Apparel, as are in use as well at home as abroad, those being least gazed on that go as most men do. Yet it cannot be justified before the Face of Discretion, or the Charity due to your own Country-men, to esteem no Doublet well made, nor Glove worth wearing, that hath not passed the hands of a *French* Tailor, or retains not the scent of a *Spanish* Perfumer. A vanity found incident to the People of *England*.

20. All your days serve God with all the reverence you are able, and do all the good you can, making as little unnecessary work for Repentance as is possible. And the Mercy of our Heavenly Father supply all your Defects in the Son of his Love. Amen.

F I N I S.

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